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**STORYTELLING AS AN INSTRUMENTAL COMPONENT OF SELF-
PRESENTATION IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

Abstract: *The role of storytelling, narrative as an important component of self-presentation in business communication is considered. It is investigated that the students of technical universities using storytelling spontaneously, do not link them with the concept of «business cooperation». The different tools of narrative practices used by psychologists and teachers for developing professional skills to freely express opinions in a given direction in terms of psychological patterns of the self-identity process and in terms of rhetoric are analyzed.*

Keywords: *self-presentation in business communication, personality image, self-presentation tools, narrative, storytelling, SmallTalk and ARE techniques, «Rory's Story Cubes» method.*

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**СТОРИТЕЛЛІНГ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТАЛЬНИЙ КОМПОНЕНТ
САМОПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЇ В ДІЛОВОМУ СПІЛКУВАННІ**

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Анотація: Розглянуто роль сторітеллінгу (розповідання історій), наративу як одного з важливих компонентів самопрезентації в діловому спілкуванні. Досліджено, що студенти технічних спеціальностей у ВНЗ використовують розповідання історій спонтанно, не пов'язують їх з поняттям «ділова взаємодія». Проаналізовано різні інструменти розвитку наративної практики, які використовуються психологами та педагогами для розвитку вміння професіонала вільно висловлювати думки в заданому напрямку з точки зору психологічних закономірностей процесу самопрезентації особистості та з точки зору риторики.

Ключові слова: самопрезентація у діловому спілкуванні, імідж особистості, інструменти самопрезентації, наратив, сторітеллінг, техніки SmallTalk та ARE, методика «Rory's Story Cubes».

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СТОРИТЕЛЛИНГ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТАЛЬНЫЙ КОМПОНЕНТ САМОПРЕЗЕНТАЦИИ В ДЕЛОВОМ ОБЩЕНИИ

Аннотация: Рассмотрена роль сторителлинга (рассказывание историй), нарратива как одного из важных компонентов самопрезентации в деловом общении. Определено, что студенты технических специальностей в ВУЗах используют сторителлинг спонтанно, не связывают его с понятием «деловое взаимодействие». Проанализированы различные инструменты развития нарративной практики, используемые психологами и педагогами для развития умения профессионала свободно выражать мысли в заданном направлении с точки зрения психологических закономерностей процесса самопрезентации личности и с точки зрения риторики.

Ключевые слова: самопрезентация в деловом общении, имидж личности, инструменты самопрезентации, наратив, сторителлинг, техники SmallTalk и ARE, методика «Rory's Story Cubes».

Problem setting. The intensity and diversity of the communication processes in modern society demands significant resources from the person. The demands are associated with the management of self-impression. Increasing of the person's social bonds, involvement in a large number of social groups leads to the need for effective self-presentation in everyday household contacts, as well as in business communication. The development of mass communications, political and social technologies increases the importance of image management processes and building of their own image in business communication, which is considered not only as a tool for all kinds of manipulation, but also as an essential element of self-realization.

In recent decades, we can see active development of the methods of the communicative competence improvement, which is the presentation basis of their personality features, interests and needs to the world around [1; 2].

In our opinion, it is relevant to consider psychological aspects of the use of personal self-presentation tools in business communication among technical specialists. Specialists in technical areas traditionally consider issues of personal communication (including image management) secondary as compared to the substantive work issues. However, the social practice of personality functioning in the organization proves the importance of the personality communicative competence in any sphere of professional activity. During training at the university it is necessary to form purposefully among future professionals not only technical,

but also social competence. The basic social skills of any professional are: adequate image management as a professional, the efficiency of the business interaction, the ability to resolve conflicts constructively in professional dialogue.

Paper objective is to review the practical tools of the self-presentation narrative component in the business cooperation of technical specialists.

Paper main body. One of the main ways of self-realization of a person in the world, their life experience is the creation of narratives (the organization of life experience in the form of a story). The process of self-presentation may include, in addition to using self-descriptions and demonstration of their attitudes, other techniques, for example, storytelling about themselves. Thus, the narrative can be seen as an instrumental component of self-presentation.

Human stories form their image. Attractive image – is a part of the business communication culture. Personal image is giving us an idea not only of their appearance, but also about their inner world. The image includes personality traits both naturally exhibited, and specially presented. Image management in order to build the image is the art of targeted attracting the attention of the communication partner to the specific features of their appearance, behavior and narrative that trigger mechanisms of social perception of the partner [3]:

- superiority image management – the selection, emphasizing of external signs of excellence in clothes, manner of speech, behavior;
- attractiveness image management – the work spent on bringing the clothes in line with the exterior;
- relationship image management – the demonstration to one's partner their attitude with the help of verbal and non-verbal means;
- status and behavioral causes image management – the drawing of attention to the reason of their actions that seems the most appropriate to the subject.

The main function of self-presentation in business communication is associated with the awakening of interest and trust of the partner and the drawing of attention to the problem. This may lead to the emergence in a communication partner of the need to achieve the common goal and to provoke some action.

At the heart of image formation the following principles lie:

- the principle of repetition: only the kind of information that is repeated is well remembered;
- the principle of continuous exposure gain: increasing of well reasoned and emotional appeal.
- the principle of «double effect»: perception not only on conscious, but on a subconscious level.

A personality, presenting oneself in the business cooperation, actively uses psychological mechanisms such as fascination, attraction, stereotyping. Fascination is a kind of charm or appeal, characterized by verbal influence, intonation, facial expressions, mannerisms (of speech, movements and so on), at which the minimum loss of information for the communication partners, their friendly disposition is achieved. Attraction is the allure and magnetism which is characterized by visually fixed emotional relationship of a person to someone as a manifestation of sympathy or willingness to communicate (smiling, rejoicing, movement towards, etc.). Stereotyping is the use of a stereotypical view that sets specific «halo» of partner's relationship to us.

Thus the fascination and attraction enable the individual to establish maximum friendly contact as much as possible, and stereotyping often gives a meaningful direction to the contact.

Among the image management content areas are:

- causes of behavior (motives and needs);
- characteristics of business and personal qualities (responsibility, reliability, communication skills, etc.).
- life and professional values
- life and professional experience
- targets and symbols of success

Stories about different aspects of personal life direct the attention of the partners in dialogue. However, quite often the individual does not attach importance to their personal stories and is only fragmentarily aware of their role in the business interaction.

For example, a survey of students of NTU «KhPI» revealed that they use storytelling spontaneously and do not connect it with the concept of «pragmatic cooperation».

Let us consider in more detail the phenomenon of self-presentation. In recent years, the number of studies on the phenomenon of self-presentation has increased. This problem is developed by V. Chiker, O. Pikuleva, V. Panferov, V. Khoroshikh, A. Bodalev, V. Kunitsyna, E. Sidorenko, Yu. Emelyanov, Yu. Krizhanskaya etc.

For the analysis of self-presentation Fedorova [4] suggests using A. Leontiev «activity-action-operation» scheme. With respect to self-presentation process, this scheme can be applied as follows: self-presentation is grounded with a motive on the activity level. It is characterized by target on the action level and includes various means at the transaction level. Thus, the process of self-presentation can be viewed at three levels of analysis: the motivational level, the goal level and instrumental level (tool level). At each of these levels the self-presentation process is regulated by a set of different personal and situational factors.

As practical psychologists and educators, we are primarily interested in the instrumental level – it is made up of self-presentation techniques, tools and ways in which the subject realizes the goals and motives of image management in a particular situation of interpersonal interaction. Self-presentation techniques can be classified into two bases: the sign system that is being used (verbal, non-verbal) and the subject of self-presentation for verbal techniques (direct, indirect). Selecting the verbal techniques of self-presentation is regulated by situational factors such as acquaintance with the interaction partner, goals of interaction and role-structure of interaction as well as personal factors such as the level of self-monitoring.

Narrative is a special verbal technique of self-presentation. The subject's narrative (story) about current life events is organized in chronological sequence. There are two so-called «landscape» in a story told by a person: action landscape and consciousness landscape. Events and actions, i.e. all the answers to the questions «what did», «who made», «where», «when», «how», «in what circumstances», are arranged on the action landscape. Intentional identity categories – meanings, values, desires, hopes, dreams, expectations, life principles and voluntarily undertaken obligations are located on the consciousness landscape. In the «good» resource history action landscape and consciousness landscape are closely intertwined. Not only can we see how the hero acts in the story, but we also know, for what reasons he does so anyway and what different variants of the situation outcome mean for him [4].

Storytelling functions in professional communication of technical specialist are varied. Telling stories allows to establish the psychological contact with the partners and provides production effects:

- a description of the situation, circumstances;
- an illustration of the problems and experiences associated with the problem;
- stimulus for discussion;
- a description of the project concept, the essence of working problems;

- a description of the effects and consequences of the parties' actions;
- mentoring: learning (knowledge transfer not in the form of regulations and directives, but in stories); upbringing.

In recent decades, practical psychologists worked out a variety of programs related to the development of communicative competence in the field of self-presentation. Many programs of psychological trainings provide either appropriate units, or are directly devoted to the problems of image management in business communication in establishing contact, in implementation of influence on opinion, decision, action of the communication partner. Here are just a few.

For example, E. Sidorenko in her training program of communicative competence in the business interaction, describes the SmallTalk technique – the art of keeping the conversation going [5]. In many developed countries, SmallTalk is an inherent part of any deal, the beginning of the common business. During it people assess each other, get a lot of non-verbal information, make a brief psychological profile of the interlocutor.

C. Fleming, an expert in the field of communication, proposed an effective strategy to start a conversation with unknown person – the ARE-technique [6]:

1) A – Anchor. On the basis of available information, you seek out the point of contact; the theme may be the situation in the company, the industry and the market, and everything connected with the subject of professional activity. But there are some countries where it is not nice just to get down to business (e.g. in Japan). In this case, you can use the «standard» topics: the weather, the new models of mobile phones, etc.;

2) R – Reveal, the further progress on the subject. If you are talking about the warm spring weather, it is possible to continue to develop the theme by reflections about love for country trips, camping, fishing, tourism;

3) E – Encourage. Stimulating the participation of the conversation interlocutor: ask him/her open-ended questions (whether he/she likes to visit the countryside, hiking, etc.). The responses contain the new anchors.

Among the practical tools of self-presentation on the market of communicative competence trainings a storytelling method stands out, which was originally presented by David Armstrong (head of the Armstrong International Corporation from the United States) as a method for successful communication in an organization [7]. Under the story he meant any plot-related story, which is the expression of a particular principle or value of the company. The story in this case – is a carrier and transmitter of corporate knowledge. David Armstrong used storytelling to improve the performance indicators of his company and to teach beginners faster. In developing his method, he took into account the well-known psychological factor: stories are more expressive, exciting, interesting and easier to associate with personal experience than the rules or directives. They are better remembered, more importance is attached to them and their influence on human behavior is stronger than the effect of a more formal information.

Narratives store information and experience, help apply the accumulated experience in actual situations, stimulate emotional reactions, induce to action; develop communication skills of the personality.

Rory O'Connor (trainer and coach in the city of Belfast in Northern Ireland) has created a tool for composing stories – story cubes. The classic version of «Rory's Story Cubes» is a set of 9 cubes, on which the symbolic images (pictures) are marked. For example, the dialog cloud, arrow, light bulb, house, sleeping face, clock, etc. Now, there are additional sets of thematic blocks:

- travel with icons of different cultures – «Rory's Story Cubes: Voyages» (9 blocks);

- actions and events icons – «Rory's Story Cubes: Actions» (9 blocks);
- medical set (3 blocks) – «Medic»;
- sport set (3 blocks) – «Score»;
- «Intergalactic» (3 blocks), and many others.

Rory's Story Cubes method is used by trainers, psychologists and teachers for the development of professional skills to freely express thoughts in a given direction in rhetoric terms and from the standpoint of psychological laws of self-identity process.

Conclusions of the research. One important component of self-presentation in business communication is a narrative identity, primarily targeted to tell stories. Storytelling – telling the stories about actual aspects of the individual activities direct the attention of the partners in dialogue. Storytelling functions in professional communication of technical specialists are diverse: a description of the circumstances, the business situation; description of the project concept, the essence of work issues; description of the effects and consequences of the parties' actions and others. Stories may be an illustration of a problem and experiences associated with the problem, the stimulus for discussion. They help to carry out mentoring – knowledge transfer can take place not only in the form of regulations and directives, but in stories.

It has been revealed that the technical specialties students use storytelling spontaneously and do not connect them with the concept of «pragmatic cooperation».

It can be noted that the practical psychology presents a wide selection of tools for the storytelling development as a component of self-presentation. Pedagogues need to use these tools for the development of communicative competence in the future technical specialists in their university studies.

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